

the HUROSAGI corpse delivery service  
黒鷺死体宅配便

spin  
-off



MATSUOKA KUNIO youkai exterminator  
松岡國男 妖怪退治



otsuka eiji 大塚英志 yamazaki hosui 山崎峰水  
Hadokawa Comics A

This series is a spin-off/prequel to *The Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service*, which has a fantastic English translation from Dark Horse Comics. Seriously, it's a great translation. We're fans of *The Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service*, and if you're reading this, chances are that you are too. We figured that a spin-off manga set in the early 1900s would never get an official translation, but weirder things have happened. So if this series does get an English release, please buy it and support the creators, translators & editors.



MATSUOKA HUNIO  
youkai  
exterminator



scanlation by  
SHIKIGANAI

# Translator's Notes

**12** The title of this chapter is 茶子の匂の匂, which translates literally to "The Tale of the Akago's Hound." Before the practice of cremation became widespread in Japan, important people were burned under grave mounds. Many of these mounds still survive today, such as the gigantic "kofun" built in the 3rd-7th centuries to honor emperors and local rulers. But there are smaller examples as well, such as Kyoto's "mimizuka" ("Ear Mound") used to bury the ears and noses taken as war trophies during the Japanese invasion of Korea in the 1500s. Building a burial mound was thought to placate vengeful spirits.

"Akago" ("red child") translates to "newborn baby," but it's also a reference to a kind of demon described in the "Buson Youkai Emaki," a picture scroll of ghost stories drawn in the 1700s. Akago are a type of frightening but harmless apparition that take the form of red-skinned infants. According to the story, you might wake in the middle of the night to find hundreds of tiny red babies dancing all over your house... You'll be frozen, unable to look away from the strange sight until morning.

**13** "Princess" ("hime") was once used for any daughter of a high-ranking family (not necessarily just royalty). But most of the noble families back in the old days were related to the Imperial family in some way, so they were sort of royal.

**14** The Taira clan were one of four families that dominated Japanese politics during the Heian era (794-1185). The kanji for "Taira" (平) can also be read as "Hei", so they were often known as the "Heike" or "Hei clan." The Taira clan fell into conflict with their longtime rivals, the Minamoto clan (the Minamoto were also called the "Genji" clan, since the kanji for "Minamoto" (源) can be read as "Gen.") This lead to the Genpei War (1180-1185), during which the Taira and Minamoto did their best to slaughter each other. The Taira were finally defeated at the battle of Uji, but a few members of the family escaped and continued to attack the Minamoto in later civil wars. So, the princess in this story is most likely one of the fleeing Taira survivors.

**14** "Misaki" is a term in the Japanese folk religion to describe supernatural beings ranging from Shinto gods to fox spirits, ghosts and demons. Misaki are said to be invisible to human eyes, but generic misaki are often depicted as foxes or wolves, similar to the wasp-shaped "kamartachi" wind spirits. Although most misaki are minor spirits, they can be used to invoke powerful curses.

**15** Matsuo Kuroi (1875-1962) is better known as Yanagita Kunio (since his wife was from a higher-ranking family, he took her name). Yanagita Kunio was one of the first scholars to take an academic interest in Japanese folklore. He was part of an emerging movement among historians to focus on the lives of common people, not just famous people. He recorded folktales and legends from rural Japan in his "Tales from Tono" collection. He also analyzed the historical and linguistic roots of many stories.

Tayama Rokuya (1872-193) later changed his name to Tayama Katai. He was a famous Japanese writer and one of the founding members of the "naturalist" literary movement, which used semi-autobiographical novels to explore the realistic (and often darker) aspects of human nature. This was in contrast to earlier "romantic" literature that focused on beauty and pathos. Tayama's novels are known for having a rather pessimistic tone.

Tayama and Yanagita were good friends and members of the same literary circles in Tokyo, but they eventually had a falling out. Yanagita criticized Tayama's "predictable" writing, so Tayama inserted some snark about Yanagita's marriage into one of his novels... bet you didn't predict that, Yanagi!



# Translator's Notes

10 Matsuoka is referencing the poem "Ich will mich im grünen Wald ergehn" ("I Shall Go For A Walk In The Green Woods) and the essay "Die Götter im Exil" ("The Gods in Exile") by Heinrich Heine. Heine (1797-1856) was a German writer known for his romantic, nature-inspired, folklore-influenced writing. Both Yanagita and Tayama were fans of European literature, but they preferred realist writers like Henrik Ibsen over Heine's literary romanticism. So Matsuoka is making a little joke - the forest is so spooky that even he, an ardent realist, feels like quoting an overdramatic German poet. Tayama, whose commitment to the "naturalist" movement was much stronger, is not impressed.

## I Shall Go For A Walk In The Green Woods

by Heinrich Heine

I shall go for a walk in the green woods  
Where flowers bloom and birds sing  
For once I lie down in my grave  
With my eyes and ears covered by earth  
I'll never again see the flowers  
Nor will鸟song break my silence

12 Why are they calling their friend "S-kun?" Since his name is written with a letter "S" instead of a Japanese symbol, I'm guessing it's a nickname. Most likely, S-kun was involved in the same European-influenced literary circles as Matsuoka and Tayama.

20 The "Ryōjin Hishō" is a collection of poetry and songs from the 12th century that mentions "mitsaki" from the northeast direction." In traditional Japanese onmyōdō (a form of sorcery that was practiced at the time), the northeast is considered an unlucky direction. For instance, evil spirits often enter a home from the northeast, and people traveling in that direction are advised to take a circuitous route to avoid going directly northeast.'

20 One of the most famous Tairas actually lived over a hundred years before the Genpei War, though. Taira no Masakado was attacked by his political rival, Minamoto no Tasaku, which set off several years of brutal fighting between the two families. The battles escalated until Taira no Masakado attacked a government outpost, making him an enemy of the state. Realizing that he'd gone too far, Masakado decided that he might as well go broke. He quickly conquered half a dozen provinces, and many believed that he intended to seize the Imperial Throne. Taira no Masakado's swift rise to power was accompanied by earthquakes, eclipses, strange lights in the sky, and other disturbances throughout the empire, so people believed that he had supernatural powers.

Finally, Imperial forces caught up to Masakado and killed him, burying his body parts in separate graves so his spirit would never rise again... but according to legend, his head flew away and landed in the tiny fishing village of Shinbasaki, which would eventually become the city of Tokyo. There's a popular novel series called "Totto Monogatari" in which an evil sorcerer awakens the spirit of Masakado and wreaks havoc on Tokyo.



# Translator's Notes

**20** Taira no Masakado's daughter, Princess Takiyasha, is a popular figure in folklore as well. After her father's death, Takiyasha secluded herself in the ruined palace and became a powerful sorceress capable of summoning spirits to attack her family's enemies. So the Taira family had a reputation for being spirit users.

**21** Sae-no-kami stones like the one at Kurosga Village are still a common sight in rural Japan. According to Japanese mythology, the father god Izanagi had descended into the underworld to rescue his dead wife, but he was chased by a terrifying demon. He threw a stick to distract the demon, and the stick transformed into the god Sae-no-kami. Sae-no-kami protects the spirits of the dead from entering the world of the living, and also protects against evil-spirits that might enter ones home. So, in ancient times, people would place large stones at the corners of their property and the entrances of their villages to symbolize the god. These stones could also be seen as a warning for outsiders to stay away from the village. Sometimes the stones are in pairs, symbolizing Izanagi and his wife Izanami, and sometimes they're even carved into the shape of male and female genitals. When Buddhism came to Japan, people began to place stone statues of the bodhisattva Jizo (protector of children) at borders and crossroads. So Sae-no-kami became associated with Jizo, and Jizo became a protector of travelers.

**21** Throughout the world, the number seven usually has some kind of supernatural significance, probably because the seven stars of the Big Dipper are one of the most recognizable constellations in the night sky. The world's oldest map of the constellations was discovered in Japan, and there are many legends related to the Big Dipper.

**23** Motsuoka refers to unlucky and lucky days of the calendar, such as "Koushin Day" and "sechiku" festivals. The Koushin is almost extinct today, but remnants of old Koushin beliefs survive in Shinto and Buddhism. Koushin practitioners believed that three worms resided in the human body, and that every 60 days, the worms would fly to heaven while the person as sleeping and report their sins to the gods. But if the village had a "Koushin Day" festival on the 60th night, the worms would be unable to make their report. This is very similar to the Chinese story of the "kitchen god."

"Sechiku" originally referred to five yearly seasonal festivals. Since cooking was forbidden on the day of the festival, people would prepare boxed meats ahead of time. These simple foods eventually transformed into "osechi," the lavish and elaborate meals that are eaten on New Year's today.

**26** Although fingerprints have been used as signatures for thousands of years, police didn't start using fingerprints for identification until the 1890s and the practice didn't become widespread until the early 1900s. So, at the time this story is set, fingerprinting would be considered very new technology.

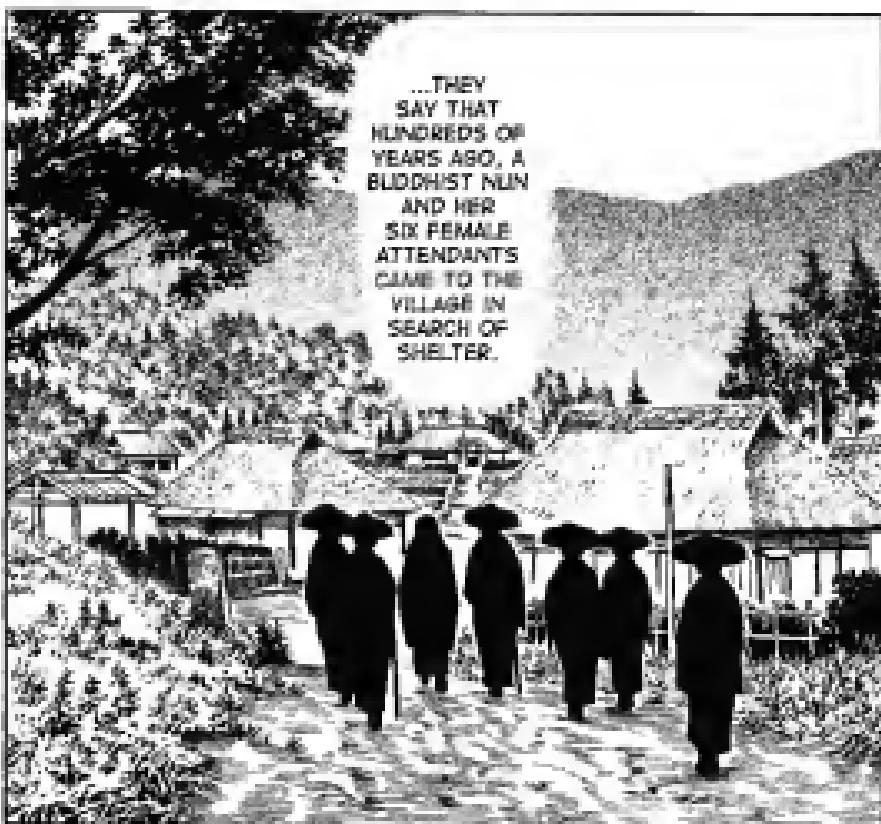
**29** As part of the Japanese funeral ritual, the deceased is given a new Buddhist name so their spirit won't return if their old name is spoken. The length and complexity of the Buddhist name depends on the size of the family's donations to the temple. A simple name like the one on the woman's grave marker in this story would just use an alternate pronunciation of the kana in the original name. But for a million yen or so you can get a death name written with ultra-obscure kana that only priests can read, for the ultimate afterlife bragging rights.

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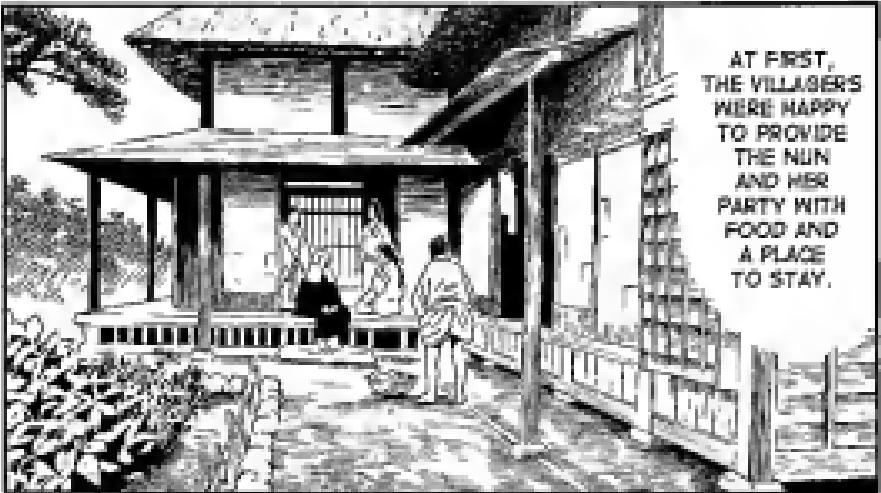
# The Tale of the Ghost Child's Grave

...THEY  
SAY THAT  
HUNDREDS OF  
YEARS AGO, A  
BUDDHIST MUN  
AND HER  
SIX FEMALE  
ATTENDANTS  
CAME TO THE  
VILLAGE IN  
SEARCH OF  
SHELTER.



HER NAME  
WAS PRINCESS  
KUROSAKI.

BUT THE  
MUN WAS  
ACTUALLY A  
DAUGHTER  
OF THE  
NOBLE  
HEIKE  
CLAN.



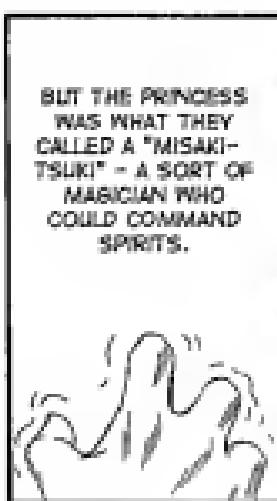
AT FIRST,  
THE VILLAGERS  
WERE HAPPY  
TO PROVIDE  
THE NUN AND  
HER  
PARTY WITH  
FOOD AND  
A PLACE  
TO STAY.



SOME OF  
THE VIL-  
LAGE-  
RS FELT  
THAT HAR-  
BORING THE  
PRINCESS  
COULD PUT  
THEM IN  
DANGER.



BUT PURSU-  
ERS CAME  
SEEKING THE  
PRINCESS,  
AND RUMORS  
OF HER TRUE  
IDENTITY  
BEGAN TO  
SPREAD.



BUT THE PRINCESS  
WAS WHAT THEY  
CALLED A "MISAKI-  
TSUKI" - A SORT OF  
MAGICIAN WHO  
COULD COMMAND  
SPIRITS.



AND SO  
THEY  
HATCHED A  
PLOT TO  
MURDER  
HER AND  
THE SIX  
ATTEN-  
DANTS!

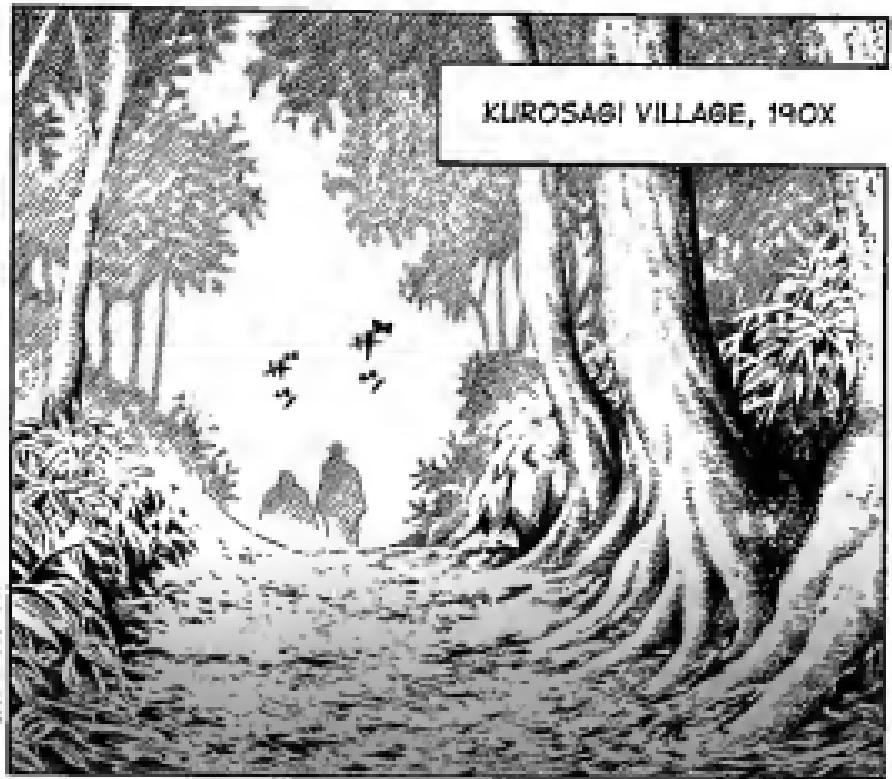




Chapter I  
The Tale of the Ghost Child's Grave

第一話

赤子塚の話



KUROSAGI VILLAGE, 190X

© 1992 TELK TELP

TAYAMA ISOKUJI. HE WOULD ONE DAY  
BECOME TAYAMA KATAI, A WELL-  
KNOWN NOVELIST AND THE FOUNDER  
OF THE "NATURALIST" MOVEMENT IN  
JAPANESE LITERATURE.



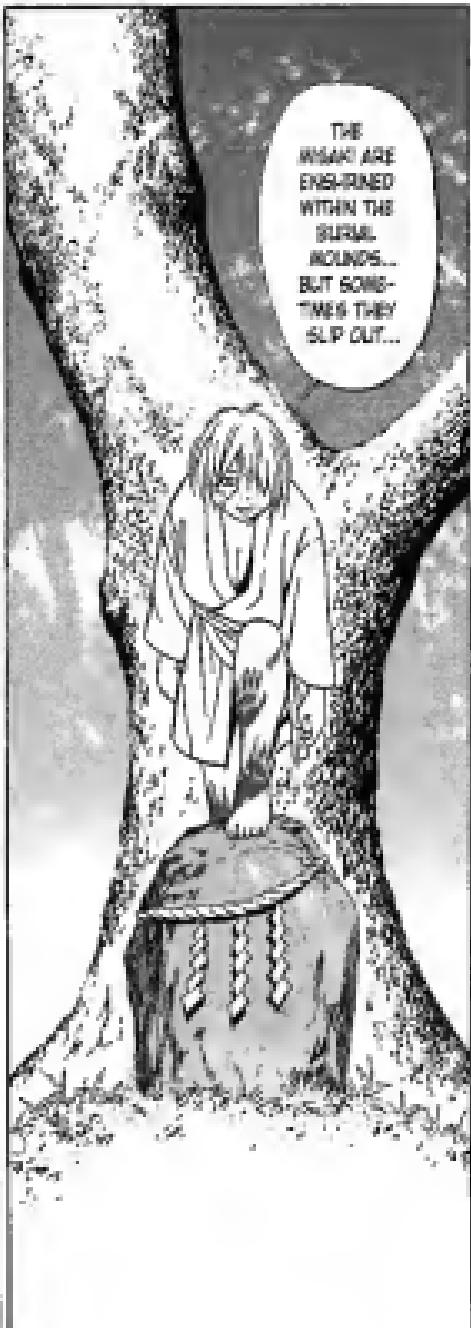
HA HA HA...  
AND I GUESS  
WE'RE HEADED  
TO THIS VILLAGE,  
HUH?

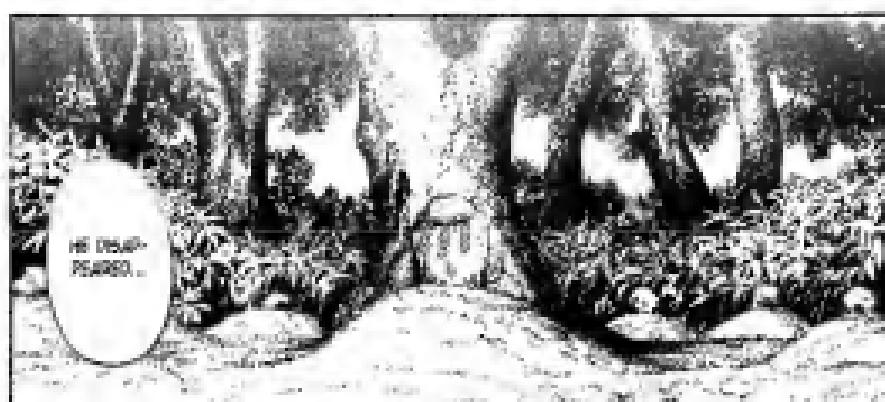


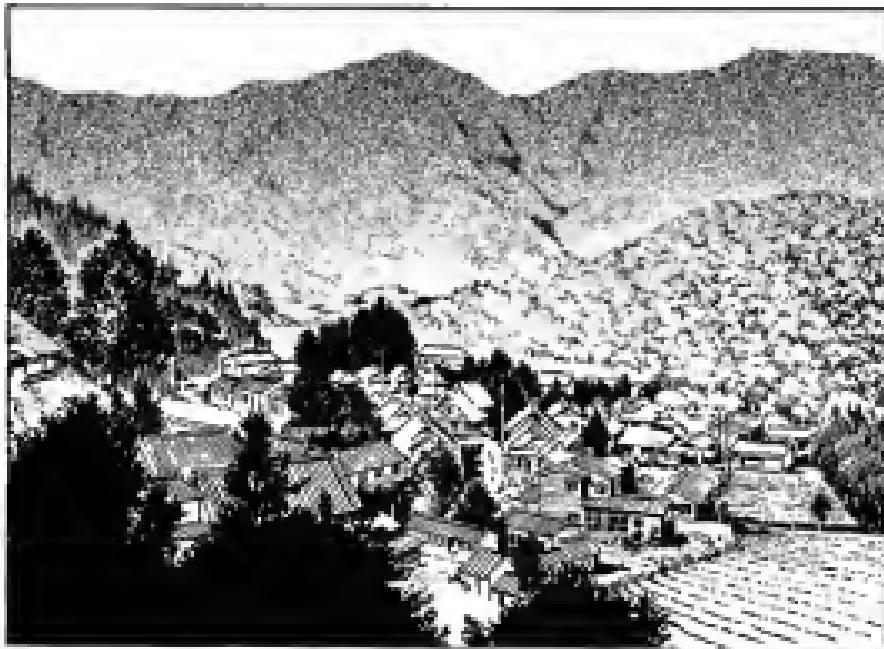
MATSUOAKA KUNIO; LATER IN LIFE, HE  
WOULD BE KNOWN AS YANASITA KUNIO,  
THE AUTHOR OF "TONO MONOGATARI"  
AND MANY OTHER BOOKS ON JAPA-  
NESE FOLKLORE AND LOCAL CUSTOMS.

...AND THE VILLAGERS  
WERE SO AFRAID THAT  
THEY BUILT SEVEN  
RUGGED MOUNDS TO  
ENSHINE THE WOMEN'S  
SPIRITS, THEREBY  
BURNING THE CURSE.  
OR SO SAY THE OLD  
STORIES, ANYWAY.  
SHUN IS A BIT MORE  
CYNICAL ABOUT THE  
LEGENDS OF HIS  
VILLAGE.





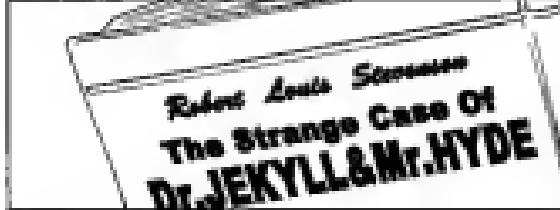




NOTE: HAKUCHA RUMIKO WAS A MEIJI-ERA JOURNALIST AND NOVELIST KNOWN FOR HIS ADVENTURE AND DETECTIVE STORIES. —



SFX: "PFLPFL"





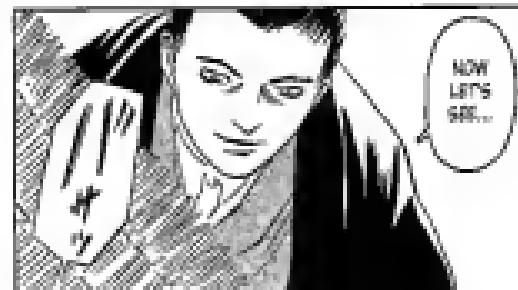




Panel 3-5: DEPICTING THE HEART RUMINATION OF THE CORE MURKIN CONSPIRACY









THOSE  
BURIAL  
MOUNDS ARE  
Cursed...

IF EVEN A CITY  
BOY FROM  
TOKYO SAYS  
IT'S A CURSE, IT  
MUST BE  
TRUE...

MASA...  
HA, IF I'M  
NOT MISTAKEN,  
THE "THREE  
HORSES"  
MENTIONS THEM.  
"THE HORSES  
THAT CAME  
FROM THE  
NORTH-EAST  
ARE TERRIBLE  
BEASTS."

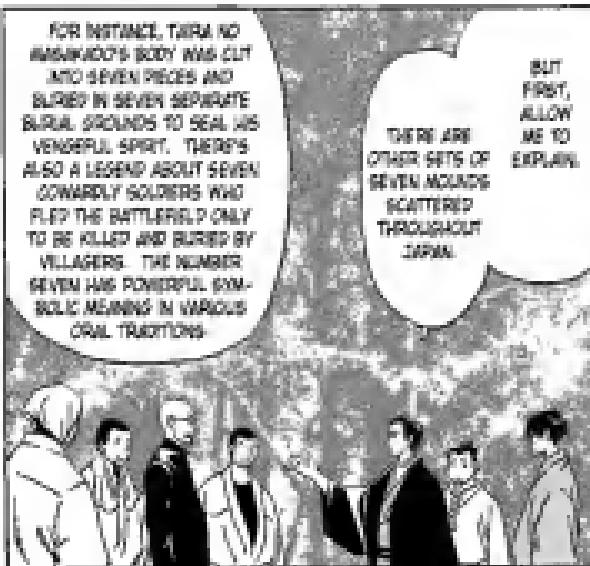


FOR INSTANCE, THERE'S NO  
ASSUMING OGI'S BODY WAS CUT  
INTO SEVEN PIECES AND  
BURIED IN SEVEN SEPARATE  
BURIAL GROUNDS TO SEAL HIS  
VENERABLE SPIRIT. THERE'S  
ALSO A LEGEND ABOUT SEVEN  
COWARDLY SOLDIERS WHO  
FLIED THE BATTLEFIELD ONLY  
TO BE KILLED AND BURIED BY  
VILLAGERS. THE NUMBER  
SEVEN HAS POWERFUL SYM-  
BOLIC MEANING IN VARIOUS  
ORAL TRADITIONS.

THERE ARE  
OTHER SETS OF  
SEVEN MOUNDS  
SCATTERED  
THROUGHOUT  
JAPAN.

BUT  
FIRST,  
ALLOW  
ME TO  
EXPLAIN.

HMP?  
WHAT ARE  
YOU DOING?



WHENEVER THESE GROUPINGS OF SEVEN INCONUS OCCUR, THE LARGEST IS USUALLY DESIGNATED AS THE "NORTH STAR." MOST LIKELY, THIS IS A REMNANT OF THE OLD STAR-WORSHIP CULT THAT FLOURISHED IN ANCIENT TIMES.

OF COURSE, THE MOST FAMILIAR EXAMPLE WOULD BE THE SEVEN STARS OF THE BIG DIPPER.



SO WHAT OUTSIDERS WERE THEY WORRIED ABOUT BACK THEN?



...JAPAN

I NOTICED THAT YOU HAD A SHI-NO-KAMI STONE AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE VILLAGE — TRADITIONALLY, THOSE ARE INTENDED AS A SPIRITUAL BARRIER AGAINST OUTSIDERS.



...WELL, I'VE HEARD OF THINGS LIKE PEOPLE BEING POSSESSED BY FOX SPIRITS AND ALL THAT.

SORRY, HE'S JUST OBVIOUSLY OBSESSED WITH FOLKLORE. JAPANESE FOLKLORE, WESTERN FOLKLORE, SOBBAK MATTER.

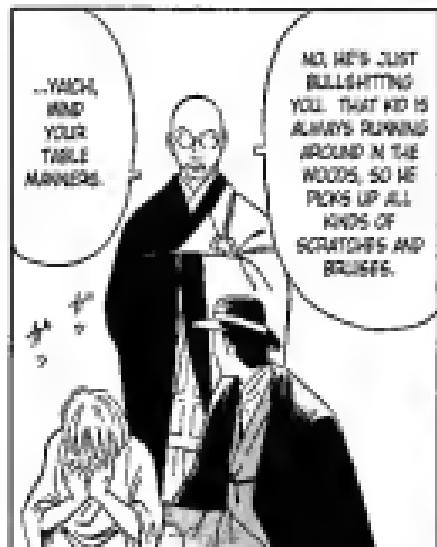
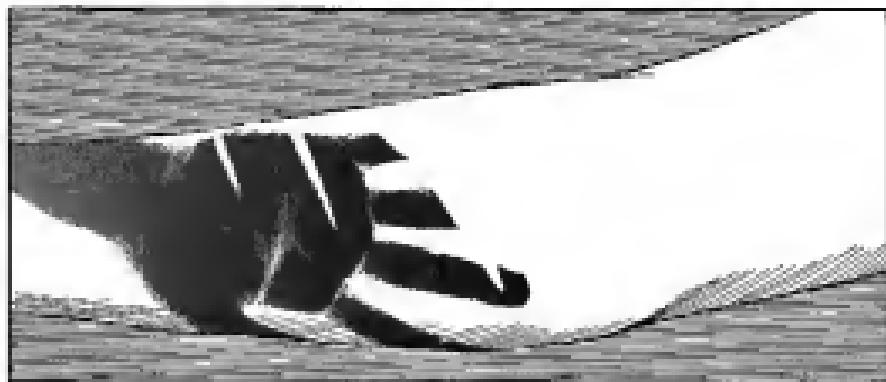
DR. MATSUOKA-KUN?

THE MOUNTAIN FOLK, OF COURSE! I BELIEVE THAT THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WHO INHABITED JAPAN IN ANCIENT TIMES HAD ABILITIES BEYOND OUR CURRENT UNDERSTANDING...

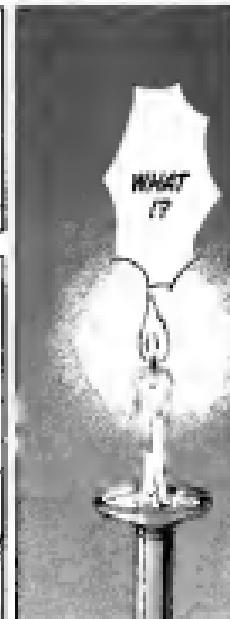


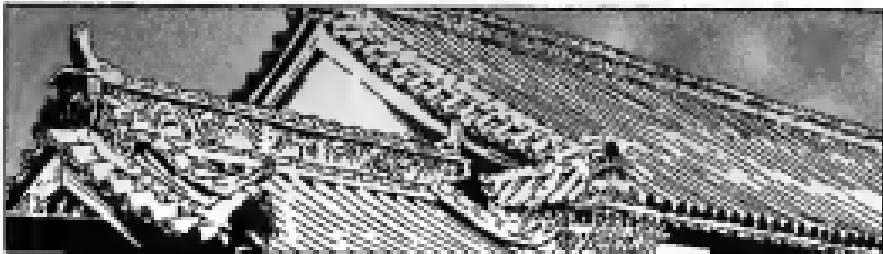


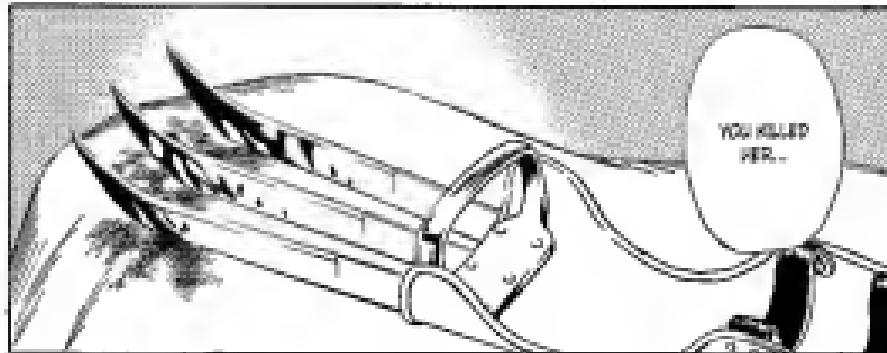
























SFX: "BLAST!"



SFX: "SCATTERED SCARF!"



IS THIS...  
IS THIS  
REALLY  
YOSHIKO-  
SAN?



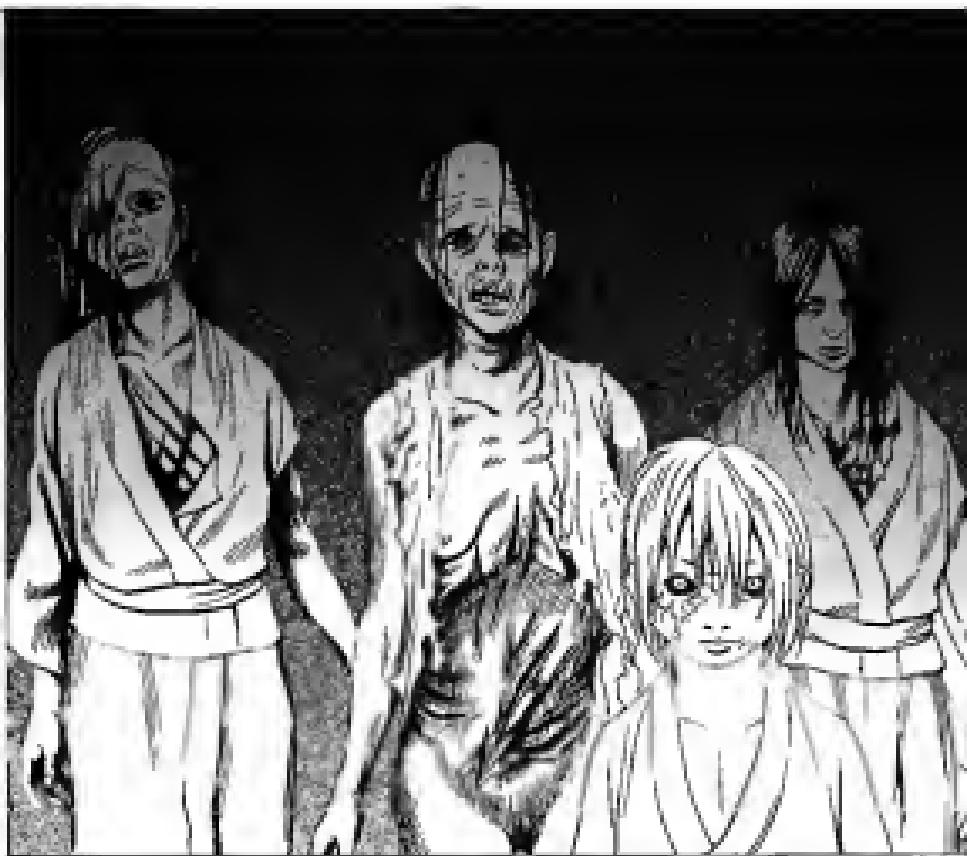
YOU  
DIDN'T  
KILL  
ANY-  
BODY.

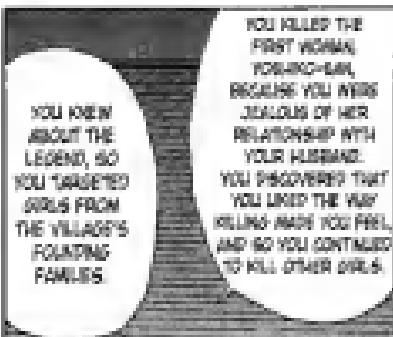
S-SAN.











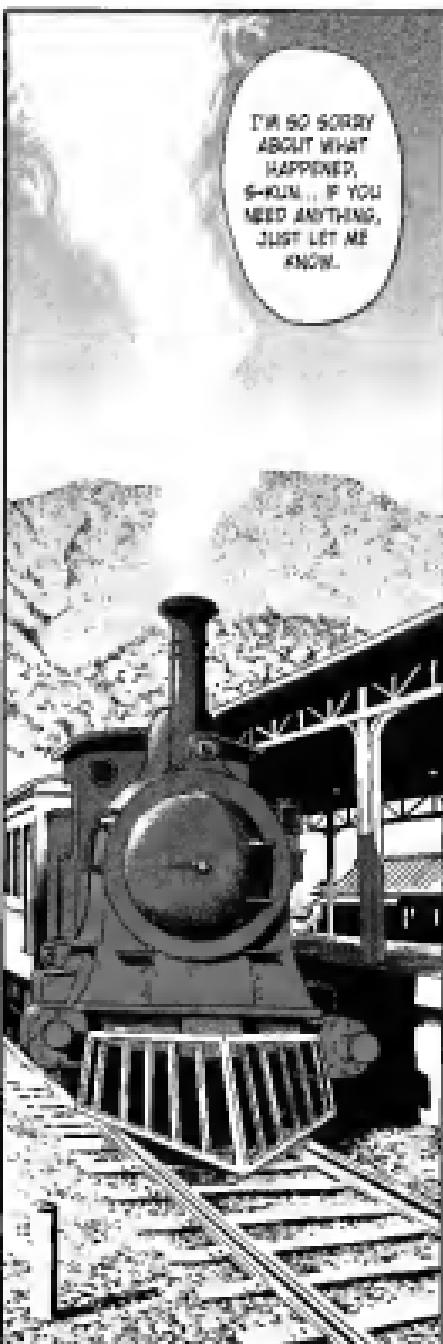
BOOK - INTRODUCTION TO HYPNOTISM



SHE'S







I FOUND A PLASHERED-UP BABY LYING IN FRONT OF THAT WOMAN'S GRAVE, SO I TOOK THE POOR KID IN.

HOW SHOULD I KNOW?

IS THAT SO...

YOU KNOW, I DID HEAR A RUMOR THAT YOSHIKO WAS PREGNANT.

THEN IT'S POSSIBLE THAT YAECHI-KUN WAS BORN FROM A DEAD WOMAN, ISN'T IT? IT WOULD EXPLAIN THE SCARS...

THEY RESCUED THE BABY, AND SUPPOSEDLY HE BECAME THE FOUNDER OF MY TEMPLE. HIS NAME WAS "ZANSHOU," WRITTEN WITH THE KANJI FOR "SURVIVOR" AND "MOUTH" BECAUSE HE WAS SAVED BY THE SOUND OF HIS CRYING. WHEN I BECAME A PRIEST, I TOOK THE NAME "ZANSHOU" AS WELL.

...COME TO THINK OF IT, THOUGH, THE LEGEND DID SAY THAT THE MURDERED PRINCESS KOROSHI WAS PREGNANT WHEN SHE DIED. AFTER THE VILLAGERS BURIED HER, THEY HEARD A SOUND OF A BABY CRYING FROM INSIDE THE GRAVE...

I THINK YOU HAVE GOOD INTUITION, GAGUYAMA-SAN.

NO...

I'M TELLING YOU, HE'S JUST SOME RANDOM BRAT I PICKED UP.

DO YOU WANT WRITE "YAECHI" WITH THE KANJI FOR "EIGHT" AND "ONE"... EIGHT PEOPLE WERE BURIED, BUT ONE SURVIVED.

